

News Release



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A Balanced Plan from Public Input

Crystal Cove Historic District Plan Ready for State Park Commission Hearing

NEWPORT BEACH – The plan for the Historic District of Crystal Cove State Park is now set to go before the California State Park and Recreation Commission on Friday February 21, 2003, in Newport Beach. The hearing comes after two years of an extensive public input process that included planning hearings, planning workshops and tours of the Historic District.

The State Parks and Recreation Commission hearing will be held in the Pacific Ballroom of the Radisson Hotel, 4545 MacArthur Boulevard, in Newport Beach, beginning at 9:30 a.m.

“The public input process, “ said Acting State Park Director Ruth Coleman, “has been exceptional throughout this entire process, almost textbook, in how it has opened doors to a multitude of creative ideas for this special place. Those ideas have helped us create a plan that is truly a shared vision, balanced in a manner that serves the needs of the public and fulfills our responsibilities for natural and historic resource protection.”

At the State Park and Recreation Commission meeting, the Commission will be voting on two resolutions, one to approve an amendment to the existing 1982 Crystal Cove State Park General Plan and the other to support the Historic District Preservation and Public Use Plan (PPUP). The General Plan Amendment is the key document, because it allows for the implementation of the Historic District Preservation and Public Use Plan and the Crystal Cove Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

A Commission vote of support only on the PPUP is appropriate because it will indicate whether or not the Commission agrees with the vision and intent hammered out in the public input process and now outlined in the PPUP. The PPUP is designed to remain as a “living document”; meaning that State Park managers can adjust the plan in minor ways to meet

changing public and operational needs. However, it should be noted that any such future changes must remain true to the plan's original vision.

“This has been a remarkable process to follow, ” said State Parks Orange Coast District Superintendent Mike Tope. “Remarkable because the individuals and groups that provided the input essentially guided the formation of the plans now before the commission. They left no stone unturned and I think they have helped us capture the essence of a unique coastal legacy that will soon be open for the whole world to enjoy.”

Throughout the lengthy public input process, the majority of those providing comment urged that State Parks use the 1982 Crystal Cove State Park General Plan as the basis for developing the Historic District Plan. That was done and the resulting plan follows the general plan guidelines for the Historic District so closely that only minimal modification to the General Plan is needed.

Looking specifically at the General Plan Amendment, the modifications are focused on the Historic District and the Los Trancos Parking lot, as follows:

- Allows addition of such things as restrooms and entrance kiosk in the Historic District.
- Allows cottage modifications for public restrooms and program services.
- Allows for broader range and type of adaptive uses and facilities.
- Authorizes long-term use of existing park office in the Los Trancos area.
- Updates General Plan language and Land Use and Facilities Plan map.

The Historic District Preservation and Public Use Plan (PPUP) and the Environmental Impact Report spell out the specific details that will guide the use and development of the Historic District. It should be noted that the proposed PPUP and EIR were released to the public in Draft form in October 2002. Since that time, additional public comment has been received from community groups and individuals and State Parks has modified parts of the plan. The highlights of the Historic District Plan, as now modified, are as follows:

- Park Interpretation and Education: Provides for park educational programs and activities for the Historic District, shoreline, and the underwater park. Increases public access and community participation.
- Overnight Accommodations: Provide affordable short-term public overnight accommodations in unique seaside historic cottages. State Parks or a concessionaire would manage the program.
 - Up to 25 cottages for individual accommodations.
 - Up to 4 cottages for dormitory-style accommodations.
- Visitor Serving Concessions: Provides for food service, a beach store, possible management of overnight accommodations, and shuttle service to the Los Trancos parking area.
- Park Operations: Provides security, safety, resource protection, and public restrooms for the Historic District, the beach, and the underwater park.

- Up to 8 cottages for park operations, but if fewer needed, excess cottages to will revert to public overnight or educational uses.

A detailed listing of the modifications is listed in the “Staff Directed Changes” document, which accompanies this press release.

Regarding the funding of the Crystal Cove Historic District Plan, a total of \$12.1 million has been appropriated for the first phase of the restoration of the historic cottages and the initial site development. This money includes \$9.2 million from Proposition 40 and \$2.9 million from the Coastal Commission. This funding will not be affected by the current State Budget situation.

With approvals and permits from the State Parks Commission and the State Coastal Commission (no scheduled time yet) it is anticipated that the rehabilitation could begin in the Fall of 2003, with the first phase of public use facilities available by the Fall of 2004.

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